

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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TAGS: PFOR, IR, US

SUBJECT: IRANIAN PRESS COMMENTS ON WATERGATE INCIDENT

SUMMARY: EDITORIALS VIEW WATERGATE INCIDENT AS SERIOUS THREAT TO POWER AND INTEGRITY OF THE PRESIDENT, BUT BELIEVE HIS SPEECH AND DISMISSAL OF VARIOUS OFFICIALS WILL HAVE AMELIORATING EFFECT. DENERAL

REACTION OF IRANIANS IS ONE OF LAUDATORY COMMENT ON FUNCTIONING OF U. S. DEMOCRACY, WHICH EXEMPLIFIED BY PUBLIC AIRING OF SCANDAL. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS HAS CONTINUOUSLY FRONT-PAGED WATERGATE STORIES TAKEN FROM INTERNATIONAL WIRE SERVICES. THE FOLLOWING IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EDITORIALIZING ON THIS SUBJECT.

2. TEHRAN JOURNAL MAY 2 EDITORIAL "NIXON ON THE BRINK" OBSERVING POLITICAL SCANDALS ARE A PART OF ANY POLITICAL SCENE, STATES THAT DEPENDING ON THE FREEDOM EXISTING WITHIN A POLITICAL FRAMEWORK, THE SCANDAL CAN BE HIDDEN OR BLOWN WIDE OPEN AS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE UNITED STATES. COMMENTING THE WATERGATE SCANDAL BECOMING MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER POLITICAL SCANDAL, STATES IF NIXON' S WORD TO BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE HE WAS MISLED AND LIED TO BY HIS CLOSEST ASSOCIATES. THIS HAS THREATENED HIS POLITICAL EXISTENCE. HOWEVER, NIXON HAS NOW SEEMINGLY SAVED HIMSELF AND FOR THE SECOND TIME HAS BEEN FORCED TO THROW HIMSELF ON THE MERCY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND ASK THEIR JUDGMENT. CONCLUDES THE RESPONSE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN FAVORABLE, BUT THE COMING DAYS COULD BRING ANYTHING.

3. NEDAYE IRAN- E NOVIN MAY 2 SEES WATERGATE AFFAIR REACHING STAGE OF BEGINNING OF THE END AS A RESULT OF PRESIDENT NIXON' S " COURAGEOUS" ADMISSION OF RESPONSIBILITY AND CONFESSION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATES' INVOLVEMENT". OPINES SCANDAL HAD REACHED POINT THAT IF NIXON HAD TRIED TO USE HIS OFFICE AS SHIELD TO PROTECT THOSE UNDER FIRE HE WOULD HAVE ENDANGERED NOT ONLY HIS OWN PRESTIGE BUT THAT OF THE OFFICE OF THE U. S. PRESIDENCY, WHICH WOULD HAVE HAD UNDESIRABLE EFFECTS ON U. S. FOREIGN RELATIONS. BELIEVES NIXON' S SPEECH AND DISMISSAL OF A NUMBER OF PROMINENT OFFICIALS WILL HAVE AMELIORATING EFFECT UPON " CRISIS WHICH HAD ARISEN IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS" AND ALTHOUGH THE WATERGATE CASE MAY CONTINUE AS A MAIN ISSUE OF PUBLIC ATTENTION IT WILL NO LONGER CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT.

3. ETTELAAT MAY 2 OBSERVES THE WHITE HOUSE FINDS ITSELF CONFRONTED BY THE SENATE, PRESS AND INVESTIGATING COURTS ALL OF WHOM DEVELOPING DETAILS OF THE WATERGATE EXPIONAGE. SEES THE WHITE HOUSE AS GRIPPED IN A PANIC IN WHICH EACH OFFICIAL TRYING TO BLAME THE NEXT-- AND THE VICE PRESIDENT DOING ALL HE CAN TO ACQUIT THE PRESIDENT OF SUSPICION. DEPICTS WATERGATE AS COMPLICATED INTERNAL ISSUE WHICH HAS DEEPLY SHAKEN PUBLIC' S CONFIDENCE IN THE ADMINISTRATION

AND THE PRESIDENCY. CONCLUDES THE WATERGATE CRISIS IS THE TOUGHEST ISSUE NIXON HAS HAD TO FACE AFTER VIETNAM " AND MAY DEAL BY FAR A STRONGER BLOW ON THE WHITE HOUSE THAN VIETNAM EVER COULD".

5. KAYHAN (SEMI-OFFICIAL VOICE) IN ITS PERSIAN EDITION OF MAY 7 STATES THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE U. S. PRESS IN UNRAVELING THE WATERGATE HAS WON PRAISE FROM THE PRESIDENT. POINTS OUT IMPORTANT ASPECT OF WHOLE AFFAIR IS THE UNDERMINING OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE PARTY AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. APPLAUDS U. S. DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS SAYING THAT PERSISTENT DEMANDS BY REPUBLICAN SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES SHOW THAT WHEN IT COMES TO PRESERVATION OF DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS AND TO DISCOVERY OF TRUTH THEY GIVE PRIORITY

TO SUCH MATTERS OVER PARTISAN SENTIMENTS. COMMENTING UPON
SHOWING OF CONCERN OVER EFFORTS TO COVER UP THE AFFAIRS, EDITORIAL
STATES THOSE CONCERNED BELIEVE THAT ATTEMPTS TO CONCEAL SUCH
MATTERS ARE MUCH MORE SERIOUS THAN THAT WHICH OCCURRED.

6. COMMENT: IN GENERAL THE REACTIONS OF IRANIANS TO THE
WATERGATE INCIDENT HAVE RANGED FROM OPINIONS THAT IT WILL
DAMAGE THE PRESTIGE OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT TO THAT PRESIDENT
NIXON WILL BE ABLE TO THROW IT " INTO OBLIVION." THE ONE THING
WHICH STANDS OUT IS THAT GOI OFFICIALS AND OTHERS ARE HIGHLY
LAUDATORY OF DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH IS EXEMPLIFIED
BY THE AIRING OF THIS SCANDAL. BY IMPLICATION LOCAL COMMENTATORS
ARE ALSO CRITICAL OF SYSTEM IN IRAN WHICH MAKES SUCH EXERCISE
IN DEMOCRACY MUCH LESS LIKELY HERE.
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